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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 004651

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - North Korea Missile Tests

GWOT - London Bombing Anniversary

PARIS - Friday, July 07, 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

North Korea Missile Tests

GWOT - London Bombing Anniversary

(B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

The looming World Cup final, pitting France against Italy, continues to dominate headlines and front pages with the economic dailies analyzing the positive effects that the World Cup victories have on the economy and on growth in France.

The lead international story is highlighted on the front page of right-of-center Le Figaro: "North Korea Threatens Again." The inside story notes, "Kim Jong Il... is ignoring China and openly defying the U.S." Valerie Niquet, Director of the Asia Center at IFRI (French Institute on International Relations) pens an op-ed in Le Figaro entitled "The North Korean missile tests point to the weakness of the regime." Privately-run TF1 television briefly mentioned that North Korea has officially acknowledged the tests and threatens to use force if the international community tries to prevent it from carrying out further tests. (See Part C)

Right-of-center Le Figaro reports that "Teheran arrives empty-handed in Brussels" for the discussions on its nuclear program which are to begin on July 11. "Javier Solana, can at the least, be pleased by the fact that he was able to persuade the Iranian negotiator to come to Brussels... The repeated cancellations give the impression that Teheran is continuing to try to play for time." A separate piece in Le Figaro notes IAEA head Mohamed El Baradei's visit to Ankara to persuade the Turkish government to intervene in negotiations with Iran on its nuclear program "because of Turkey's geographic and religious closeness with Iran... The meeting between El Baradei and the Turkish FM is scheduled for today... It is well-timed because the latter has just returned from meeting in Washington with Condoleezza Rice and is heading for Teheran for a summit meeting."

Dominique Quinio writes an editorial on the front page of Catholic La Croix in which she outlines "Britannic Resistance" to Islamist extremism. Quinio notes that although the UK faced international scrutiny for supporting the U.S. in Afghanistan and in Iraq, the London bombings last July originated from within. All of the suicide bombers were assimilated into British life as "students, workers, neighbors, or friends." Quinio highlights the unwillingness of the UK in general and PM Tony Blair in particular to bend either to fear or to the extremist clerics' prophecies. "It is by displaying its fundamental values, and by teaching them in schools, that Britain will resist." (See Part C)

Agence France Presse wire service reports its staff has counted CIA rendition flights in Europe since 2001, and it provides a per country count. France allegedly received 28 such flights. Germany allegedly received 316.

Economic right-of-center Les Echos' correspondent in New York looks at the proposed merger of General Motors with Nissan-Renault. He doesn't see Carlos Ghosn saving General Motors in the same way he saved Nissan. GM suffers different problems and doesn't require massive recapitalization. General Motors has cash flow woes, to be sure, but its really problem is the retirement and health benefits for its employees. "GM above all needs time. The most cynical believe that the group must pass the time until its generations of retirees die. Realists remark that GM must above all progressively reduce the size of its industrial tool" so it can deal with its declining sales in the domestic market.

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

North Korea Missile Tests

"The White House is Looking for a Way to Counter"

Philippe Gelie in right-of-center Le Figaro (07/07): "In George W. Bush's first State of the Union speech in 2002, he had promised to prevent the most dangerous regimes on Earth from using the most dangerous weapons on Earth. Four years and two wars later, he is rather embarrassed when it comes to facing the moment of truth. In

spite of what is at stake, with regard to international security and the U.S.'s credibility... the American president has very few options left. Washington's hopes, after the North Korean missile tests lay with the unity of the international community and the influence that Beijing, running out of patience, would have vis-à-vis Pyongyang... But this unity is visibly shattered and the American government is looking for another way out - beyond diplomacy... But the memory of the Korean war that claimed the lives of one million people between 1950 and 1953 weighs heavily on any inclination for invasion or even preventive strikes that would lead to an escalation of the situation. The other solution is the anti-missile shield in which the U.S. has invested over 100 billion dollars over the last twenty years but that is still not 100 percent operational."

"Intimidation"

Gerard Noel writes in regional La Liberte de l'Est (07/07): "Whether concerning Iran or North Korea, the prevailing sentiment is that the international community is powerless to react to the multiple provocations from these dictatorships that see threats and blackmail as part of the panoply of petty diplomacy. It could almost be funny is the two regimes in question were not waving the use of nuclear weapons like so many red flags before the world's great powers. That weapons of this kind are in the hands of the vilest despots such as Kim Jong Il is terrifying... and not to be taken lightly. In the end, North Korea's intimidation tactics have no other goal than to try to push Washington to be forced to normalize relations. But the latter is disinclined to negotiate directly with this 'rogue state' and more prone to re-establishing order through the use of force."

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"British Resistance"

The editorial by Dominique Quinio in Catholic La Croix (07/07): "The reasons for the feeling of injustice among the Muslim community, whether they are founded or not, have not been erased. The extent of this sentiment was felt during the issue of the Mohamed caricatures. The conflicts in Afghanistan and the Middle East have been exacerbated, and the fight against terrorism has sometimes seemed careless with Human Rights (for example Guantanamo) fueling resentment and promoting a radical form of Islam." STAPLETON